

Bullying Among Middle and High School Youth

2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Background

On the Vermont YRBS, bullying was described as occurring when a student or group of students say or do unpleasant things to another student to make fun of, tease, embarrass, purposefully exclude or scare him/her. It can occur before, during, or after the school day; on school property, a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity. Electronic is any bullying that occurs through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting.¹

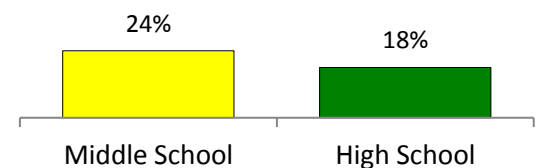
The 2015 Vermont middle school YRBS survey asked students if they have ever been bullied on school property, have ever been electronically bullied, and on how many of the past 30 days they were bullied or bullied someone else. The high school survey asked students about electronic bullying during the past 12 months, the number of days they were bullied, and the number of days they bullied someone else.¹

Bullying Prevalence

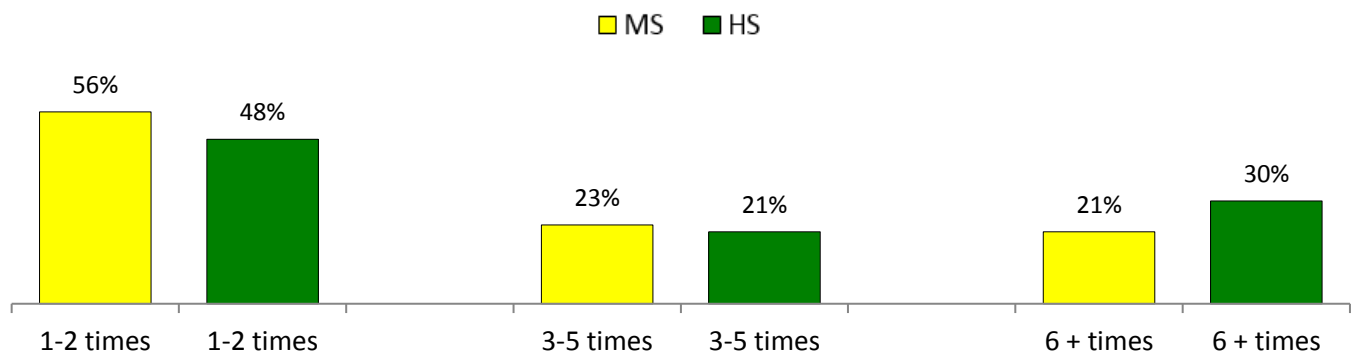
Nearly half of middle school students reported being bullied at school (46%). However, being bullied in the past 30 days has significantly decreased from 27% in 2011 to 24% in 2015. Among Vermont high school students, 18% reported being bullied in the past 30 days.

Of all students bullied during the past 30 days, about half were bullied on 1-2 days. About one in five middle school students and three in ten high school students were bullied on 6 or more days. Notably, 8% of high school students were bullied every day.

Percent of Students Who Reported Being Bullied During the Past 30 Days



Percent of Students who Reported Being Bullied During the Past 30 Days



Electronic Bullying

Because technology use changes rapidly, less is known about cyber or electronic bullying and it is more difficult to capture those trends.² It is believed that cyberbullying occurs less frequently than traditional bullying.^{2, 3}

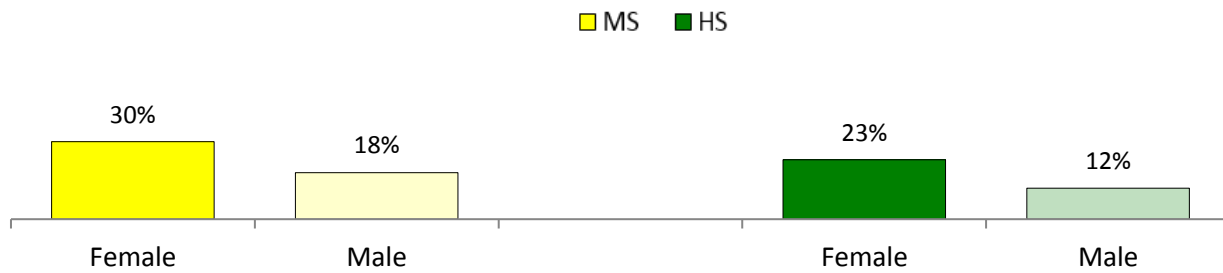
In 2015, 26% of middle school students said they have experienced cyberbullying during their lifetime. Sixteen percent of high school students reported cyber bullying in the last 12 months.

Bullying by Grade and Sex

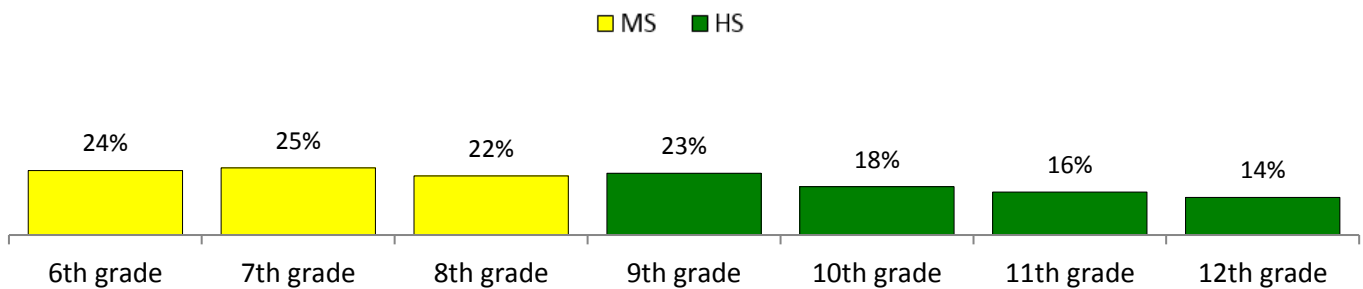
Traditional bullying and electronic bullying varies by age and sex. During the past 30 days, female students in both middle school and high school were significantly more likely than males to have been bullied. Female students were also over two times more likely to have been electronically bullied compared to males (Middle School: 36% vs. 16%; High School: 23% vs 10%).

Similar to previous research, bullying was highest among younger students, particularly those in 6th through 9th grade. Both electronic bullying and bullying during the past 30 days significantly decreased after 9th grade.

Percent of Students who Reported Being Bullied During the Past 30 Days, by Sex



Percent of Students who Reported Being Bullied During the Past 30 Days, by Grade

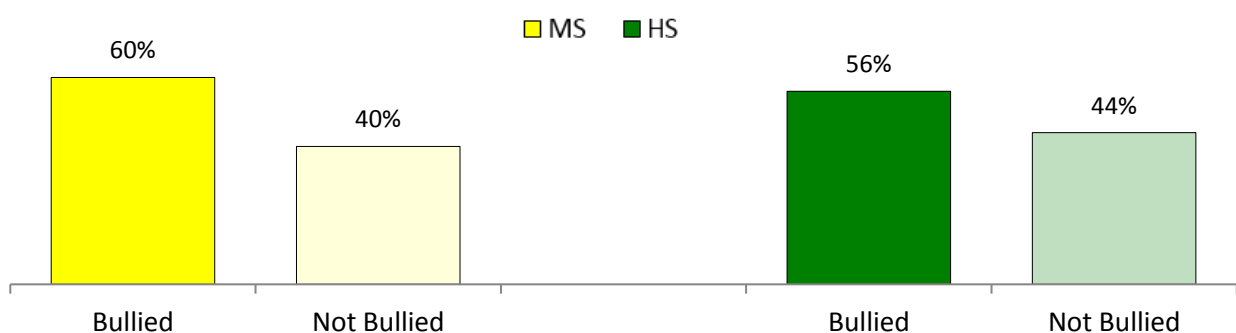


Bullying Others and the Bullying-Victim

During the past 30 days 10% of middle school students and 11% of high school students reported bullying someone else. There was no significant difference among males and females who report being a bully.

Students who reported bullying others, were also significantly more likely to report being bullied themselves. Among students who reported bullying others 60% of middle school students and 56% of high school students also reported being bullied during the past 30 days. Previous research indicated that many school bullies are also victims. Associated risks and outcomes may be even greater for these students.²

Among students who Reported Bullying Others, by % Who Have Been Bullied (a Bully-Victim) and Not Bullied During the Past 30 Days



References

1. Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) <http://healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/2015/index.aspx>
2. Birch, S., and Frederickson, N. (2015) *School bullies: Are they also victims?* In Educational Psychology by Cline, T. Gulliford, A., and Birch, S. (eds) Routledge Press, UK ISBN: 1848723318
3. Roberts, S., Zhang, A., Morgan, R.E., and Musu-Gillette, L. (2015). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014* (NCES 2015-072/NCJ 248036). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015072.pdf>

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